

The deterrent effectiveness of our military forces will depend upon their ability to respond successfully to thermonuclear war emergency in any of its foreseeable forms. This will require, among other things, that the highest national authority be capable of selecting ^{the} response ^{that} which will provide the United States and its Allies the maximum possible advantage in the specific circumstances under which deterrence may fail. It is my belief that the ability to select from among a wide range of feasible response options suited to specific circumstances could permit the United States and its Allies to ^{achieve their wartime objectives} ~~survive~~ in thermonuclear war, in a position enabling resumed progress toward their common ^{postwar} objectives, with casualties and damage reduced significantly below levels which might otherwise be expected.

It is my intention to encourage and support plans and programs which will in the future provide a posture affording such a wide latitude of response options, ^{acceptable} ~~escape~~ of selection and control for maximum advantage. Concurrently with improvements in our posture, it should be possible to reflect in basic policies and war plans, to the degree made feasible by progress toward the requisite capabilities, provisions for increased latitude in options for selective response to thermonuclear war emergency.

I am, therefore, also interested in prospects for the shorter term time period. The currently effective Single Integrated Operational Plan for strategic attack (SIOP-62) ^{permits} ~~provides~~ a variety of options/contingencies response by forces committed to strategic offensive tasks, keyed principally to duration of warning, geographic discretion, constraints, and specifics of weather and visibility. Similar latitude is ~~provided~~ in other atomic war plans.

It is requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff cause the Director of Strategic Target Planning to scrutinize the current SIOP-62 and forces committed to its execution, and that other appropriate Command

scrutiny will be to provide answers to me on the following:

- a. To what specific extent might it be feasible in the near term 1961-1962 time period to provide a wider latitude of options for response to thermonuclear war emergency, assuming that any impediments to this action embodied in the current National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy were removed?
- b. If such additional options are deemed feasible, and desirable, what would be the prudent and realistic time schedule for their earliest integration into current plans?
- c. If such additional options would depend upon changes in capabilities, would any such changes be feasible of accomplishment at reasonable cost and effort in the near term, and what specific actions would be necessary?
- d. What capabilities presently ^{not} lacking would be the principal requirements for a future posture permitting a wide variety of response options calculated to derive maximum advantage from any of the reasonably foreseeable circumstances under which deterrence to central war might fail?
- e. Are there any other major problems or difficulties foreseen, in light of the recognized necessity to avoid any disruption in the continuity of our current war ^(maintenance of current) plans and capabilities, which could weaken the overall deterrent posture?

Of specific interest would be assessment of the possibilities affecting the early development of options which might permit avoidance of attacks against enemy urban-industrial and population resources as such in initial attacks; options which would permit exclusion from initial attack, to the extent feasible, of one or more member nations of the Sino-Soviet bloc without the necessity for replanning the balance of the attack; options which would relieve selected elements of ready forces

from initial attack assignments to permit their retention as uncommitted ready reserves for possible subsequent use; options providing varying degrees of adjustment, beyond those currently planned, in force posture during periods of critical tension; and so forth.

Response by 15 June 1961 will be appreciated.

- because:
- a. President and SecDef intend to exercise more direct control over plans and programs than in past.
 - b. There is a sharp shift from past policy, and it is necessary to make this evident and clear.
 - c. Plans and programs called for are somewhat more varied and complex than current ones.

2. "Explanations" are included because of (b) and (c) above. Also, they are not presented in order to argue for or justify the requirements cited, but to lay down, as a matter of ~~xx~~ current policy, guiding criteria for the continuous reevaluation and design of posture and strategy.

However, it may be that the purposes of these sections will have been served in the course of circulation of the draft. Final statement of policy could be more "succinct," in the sense of limiting itself to concise directives. (It is not obvious that this is necessary or desirable; why not "waste the paper"?) However, this policy will not be replaced by a set of "succinct" maxims which ~~xxx~~ provide "guidance" merely in the form of inspirational slogans which do not restrict the "freedom of action" of planners and programmers.

3. Virtually none of the requirements listed exist as of April, 1961. Almost none of them are ~~xx~~ available by May 15. But how about November, 1961? No one, going down the precise list of requirements, could honestly say that none of them could be substantially achieved prior to 1963, or even 1962, let alone 1965.

a) How long will it be ~~xxx~~ before a sizeable Polaris force could serve as strategic reserve? Are there no possibilities for improving the flexibility and endurance--prior to commitment--of an airborne alert force? Is controlled use of Minuteman missiles remaining after enemy initial attack impossible: if design could be altered to include selective firing?

b) How long will it be before currently-planned mobile command posts will assure an authorized response, and will provide the basis for selective response?

c) Given mobile command posts, bomb alarm systems and the possibilities for a retaliatory "doctrine," how long would it take to institute physical safeguards against unauthorized action?

d) How long would it take to improve the bomb alarm system to give more, and more reliable, status information and information (e.g., to mobile command posts) on the size and pattern of enemy attack: basic data for a selective response?

e) How long would it take to change plans for siting additional Minuteman missiles next to cities, or upwind?

f) How long would it take to institute a minimal adequate fallout shelter program? ((This is not essential, by the way, to the achievement of major improvements, corresponding to the ones cited above, though it would be useful and could be accomplished quickly. Active anti-ICBM defense is in no sense essential to the achievement of significant and useful controlled response; if it were, controlled response would hardly be feasible in 1965.))

g) How long would it take to provide new, alternative options for the use of the alert force: 1) excluding major non-military targets; 2) holding strategic reserves, e.g., Polaris; 3) excluding individual satellites, and Communist China; 4) excluding governmental control centers?

h) How long would it take to redo the SIOP, to maximize flexibility of alternative options?

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